DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 171 087 EC 115 296

AUTHOR Blacher-Dixon, Jan
TITLE Preschool Mainstreaming: Current State of the Art.
INSTITUTION North Carolina Univ., Chapel Hill. Frank Porter Graham Center.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children (57th, Dallas, Texas, April 22-27, 1979, Session W-47); This research is part of the Carolina Institute for Research on Early Education of the Handicapped

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Definitions; *Handicapped Children; *Individual Characteristics; *Mainstreaming; *Parent Participation; *Preschool Education; Questionnaires; *Social Relations; Success Factors
IDENTIFIERS *Project First Chance; *Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

Teachers in 22 First Chance Projects and 110 Head Start Projects responded to a survey focusing on defining preschool mainstreaming, characteristics and social interaction of handicapped and nonhandicapped children, teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming, teacher preparation for mainstreaming, and parent involvement. Results showed that there are basically two types of mainstreaming, the traditional (integration of handicapped children into preschool classrooms originally for nonhandicapped children, as in Head Start and the reverse, as in First Chance. Findings further indicated that there is a high degree of clarity about what constitutes mainstreaming at the preschool level. With regard to social interaction, both groups (handicapped and nonhandicapped) had friends in both groups, and nonhandicapped children rarely ignored their handicapped peers. All respondents strongly agreed that parental involvement is a key to successful mainstreaming and found that they had enough time to meet the needs of the parents. (Author/PHR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED171087

PRESCHOOL MAINSTREAMING: CURRENT STATE OF THE ART

Jan Blacher-Dixon

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Paper presented at the 57th Annual International Council for Exceptional Children Convention, Dallas, April 22-27, 1979.

This research is part of the Carolina Institute for Research on Early Education of the Handicapped (CIREEH), funded by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

CEC

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC115296

INTRODUCTION

My presentation today will consist of two parts. First, I would like to talk briefly about the rationale for preschool mainstreaming, what we actually know about it, and what critical information we still need. Much of this information is contained, in greater detail, in Blacher-Dixon and Turnbull, Education Unlimited (1979). After outlining the gaps in our knowledge of preschool mainstreaming, I will present some data from a major survey we conducted as part of the Carolina Institute for Research on Early Education of the Handicapped.

Rationale for Preschool Mainstreaming

Why mainstream preschoolers? There is a clear, strong rationale for doing so which is supported by: legal factors, parents, teachers, and empirical research findings.

One of the most compelling legal factors in favor of preschool mainstreaming is Public Law 94-142. According to this mandate, children as young as three years of age must be provided a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (i.e., a normal preschool) if the state provides such programs to nonhandicapped children. The precise rules for fulfilling this requirement are contained in the 1977 Federal Register (p. 42488) so I will not review them here. I would like to point out, however, that this notion of legislating integration of handicapped and nonhandicapped preschools is not new; in 1972 a Congressional mandate ordered the Head Start network to serve 10% handicapped children. Over the years, preschool mainstreaming has clearly become a legislative and judicial preference in balancing the interests

of children and schools (Turnbull, 1977).

Another strong rationale for preschool mainstreaming comes from the literature which indicates that preschool mainstreaming is:

> . . .an opportunity for the handicapped to learn to "cope with normal society; offers the handicapped normal play and learning experiences (Cohen, 1975; Guralnick, 1976; Hennon, 1973; Karnes & Zehrback, 1977).
>
> . . .an opportunity for the nonhandicapped preschoolers and their teachers to learn about handicapped chidlren, and to learn to be tolerant of individual differences (Guralnick, 1976; Hobbs, 1975; Justice, 1974; Karnes & Zehrbach, 1977; and Snyder, Apolloni, & Cooke, 1977).
>
> . . .an opportunity for the handicapped to learn socially appropriate behavior, through modeling or imitation (Cooke, Apolloni, & Cooke, 1977; Devoney, Guralnick, & Rabin, 1974; Karnes & Zehrbach, 1977; Neisworth & Madle, 1975; Peterson & Haralick, 1977; Peterson, Peterson, & Scriven, 1977; Snyder, Apolloni & Cooke, 1977).
>
> . . .supported by parents (Cansler, 1977; D'Audney, 1976; Dunst, 1976, Garrett & Stovall,1972; Grossi, Pinkstaff, Henley, & Sanford, 1975; Morton & Hull, 1976).
>
> . . .important in fostering a positive self-concept for the handicapped child (Kennedy, Northcott, McCauley, & Williams, 1976; Wynne, Brown, Dakof, & Ulfelder, 1975).
>
> . . .preparation for the handicapped child's later participation in regular education and in society in general (Wynne et al., 1975).

Although there is evidence that handicapped children who attend an integrated or mainstreamed preschool do show subsequent academic progress

(see, for example, DeWeerd, 1977; a selection of Head Start Final Reports, or Rister, 1975), school success itself has not been the primary support for preschool mainstreaming. Rather, support generally comes from the social, or emotional gains that have been shown to occur, i.e., evidence that preschool mainstreaming may be "psychologically healthy." That some parents of handicapped children favor preschool mainstreaming is evident (D'Audney, 1976, Dunst, 1977; and Garrett & Stovall, 1972), but information on whether or not the parents of nonhandicapped children support preschool mainstreaming is not well-documented. It can be assumed, on the basis of the available literature, that preschool mainstreaming does more good than harm. The assumptions, however, which relate specifically to the benefits of mainstreaming (for both the preschoolers themselves and their parents) have not been empirically tested.

Rationale for Survey

The rationale for integrating preschoolers is clear; however, much of the information on preschool mainstreaming that you just heard is derived from non-data based papers, e.g., position papers written by parents or teachers, anecdotal accounts, etc. The literature contains no readily available formula for implementing preschool mainstreaming, nor does it relate any particular service model (e.g., home-based, home followed by center, center-based, technical assistance or consultative service, etc.) to successful child outcomes.

Furthermore, although there are numerous definitions of mainstreaming in the literature, most pertain to school-age children. Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, & Kukic (1975) have included specific components of mainstreaming in their definition, e.g., the notions of temporal, instructional, and social integration of exceptional children. While we recognize that

excessive detail may in fact hinder the evaluation of a mainstreaming program, clarification of definition will be necessary in order to identify which variables relate to successful child, parent, or family outcomes.

Finally, the relationship between day care arrangements and the child's parents/family has long been recognized as important. Specifically, what is the effect of preschool mainstreaming on parents, and on the child's relationships with peers?

Answers to these questions are currently being pursued by Dr. Ann Turnbull and myself in a project entitled, "The Effects of Preschool Mainstreaming on Parents," (a component of CIREEH).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Figure 1 shows the entire project schematically. However, today I will be presenting the results of our survey on preschool mainstreaming only, bocusing on SOCIAL INTERACTION IN PRESCHOOL MAINSTREAMING MODELS. Based on the available literature and on the data we have collected so far, it appears that it is the social factors connected with preschool mainstreaming that most affects parents and families of handicapped children. Hence, we refer here to social interaction among and between parents as well as children.

METHOD

Sample

The survey instrument was mailed to both directors and teachers in Region IV Head Start projects (N.C., S.C., Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Mississippi) and all First Chance Projects which suggested, in their project abstracts, that they might be mainstreamed. Approximately 46 First Chance Projects and 232 Head Start Projects were recipients of the survey (that's a total of 556 surveys mailed). About 60% of the surveys

were returned (First Chance N=22; Head Start N=110); according to noted survey research experts, this is a respectable percentage. Many surveys never reached their destinations because of address changes; others went to First Chance Projects which were not, in fact, mainstreamed.

Materials

Two survey instruments were developed and pilot tested. The Director Survey examined such variables as resources, curriculum, architectural design, and administrative arrangements. The Teacher Survey focused on defining preschool mainstreaming, characteristics and social interaction of handicapped and nonhandicapped children, teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming, teacher preparation for mainstreaming, and parent involvement including the parents of nonhandicapped as well as the parents of handicapped children.

Procedure

Two surveys were mailed to each project: one Director Survey and one Teacher Survey. The directors were asked to select one teacher in a mainstreamed classroom within that project and to have that teacher fill out the appropriate survey. The data I will be presenting to you today are from the Teacher Surveys only.

All questionnaires were coded by number and analyzed by computer. Hence, respondent confidentiality was assured.

Results

We analyzed far more data than I would ever attempt to present here today (see Figure 2). Rather, I will focus in on those data that are important for understanding the effects of preschool mainstreaming on parents and family.

Mainstreaming models. In our attempt to examine what models of preschool mainstreaming are being implemented we learned that there are basically two types: the traditional and the reverse mainstreaming models. Traditional mainstreaming is the integration of handicapped children into preschool classrooms originally for nonhandicapped children, e.g., Head Start. Reverse mainstreaming is the integration of nonhandicapped children into preschool classrooms originally designated for handicapped children. Examples of this type of mainstreaming may be found in the Handicapped Children's Early Education Programs, or First Chance network.

Definition. According to the literature, preschool mainstreaming means very different things to different people. We thus decided to explore what components of mainstreaming various projects had in common. First, we asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with various statements about the "goals" of preschool mainstreaming. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Clearly, respondents from both Head Start and First Chace projects strongly agree on the goals for preschool mainstreaming. However, bar graphs 6. and 7. do suggest that respondents from First Chance are slightly more conservative in their assumptions about parents. In other words, they more frequently circled the "NOT SURE" category when asked about parents' beliefs.

Two other important aspects of mainstreaming explored in this section of the survey were instructional integration and social integration. Data summaries are provided in Tables 1 and 2. Head Start and First Chance

projects responded almost identically to statements about instructional integration.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Note that for statements #5 and #6 over 80% of Head Start respondents answered in the "strongly" or "slightly" category, indicating some general agreement among Head Start teachers on those items.

Table 2, summarizing responses to statements about social integration, again shows the relative conservatism expressed by First Chance respondents (see items #1, 2, 3, 5, 6).

Social Interaction. Additionally, we collected a considerable amount of data on the social interaction of handicapped and nonhandicapped children in the preschool classroom. The results from both groups are fairly homogeneous. To summarize:

1. Handicapped children tend to have BOTH handicapped and nonhandicapped children as their friends or buddies.
2. Similarly most nonhandicapped children tend to have BOTH nonhandicapped and handicapped children as their friends or buddies.
3. Handicapped children frequently imitated positive behaviors (e.g., helping or sharing) modeled by nonhandicapped children and generally "fit in" with the rest of the class.
4. Although the handicapped children rarely set bad examples for their nonhandicapped peers, they sometimes imitated the negative behaviors of the nonhandicapped children (e.g., fighting or arguing).
5. On the other hand, nonhandicapped children rarely imitated the behaviors of their handicapped peers, nor did they ignore the handicapped children.

6. Nonhandicapped children frequently made special efforts to help, share and get along with the handicapped children in the preschool classroom.

Parent Involvement. All respondents strongly agreed that parental support is a key to successful mainstreaming and found that they had enough time to meet the needs of parents. However, Head Start respondents indicated that they generally need more staff assistance for planning and implementing parent activities.

Table 3 shows the types of parent involvement offered in these preschool mainstreaming programs, and those activities which teachers felt

---

Insert Table 3 about here

---

were necessary for successful preschool mainstreaming. The parents of both handicapped and nonhandicapped children tended to participate in the same types of parent involvement activities, except that parents of nonhandicapped children in Head Start participated more in regularly scheduled parent meetings, and parents of handicapped children in Head Start worked more at home on follow-up activities.

Finally, Figure 4 illustrates the extent to which parents are "mainstreamed" in these programs. The modal response to nearly all statements

---

Insert Figure 4 about here

---

about parent-parent interactions, for both Head Start and First Chance respondents, was "slightly agree."

DISCUSSION

One of the main objectives of this survey was to determine if there was consensus among those in the field (i.e., teachers) on the definition and goals of preschool mainstreaming. The data, in fact, indicate that there is a high level of understanding and clarity as to what constitutes mainstreaming at the preschool level. Furthermore, the respondents, who were primarily teachers of mainstreamed preschool classrooms, were quite optimistic about the realities of mainstreaming, e.g., the necessity of social as well as instructional integration of the children.

Interestingly, few differences appeared in the responses of Head Start and First Chance teachers. This is surprising, due to the fact that these two networks represent very different mainstreaming models, i.e., the traditional and the reverse. It is not so surprising that Head Start teachers responded similarly, since they all received similar training in classroom techniques, curriculum adaptation, etc. provided by the Region IV network. However, this is not the case for First Chance projects which are scattered rather widely across the country.

The social interaction of handicapped and nonhandicapped children, believed to be so important for successful integration, seems to present little problem for the teachers in these mainstreamed classrooms. Similarly, parent involvement factors are not cited as barriers to preschool mainstreaming. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings from this study is the fact that parent involvement activities, too, are mainstreamed. The parent-parent interactions in the classroom and before or after school suggested by this survey are not commonplace in elementary or secondary schools. Given the federal mandate to involve parents in both Head Start and First

Chance preschools, as well as the increased emphasis on parent involvement spelled out in Public Law 94-142, the positive attitude expressed by teachers and their willingness to accommodate parents is a true step on the way to successful preschool mainstreaming.

How will all this information affect the parents and families of handicapped children? Now that we have obtained a detailed description of the programmatic aspects of preschool mainstreaming, and the role of parents in those programs, we need to find out from parents what the impact of preschool mainstreaming on their families will be. The next phase of research in this section of the Carolina Institute for Research on Early Education of the Handicapped will do so.

References

Blacher-Dixon, J., & Turnbull, A.P. Preschool mainstreaming: Definitions, rationale, and implementation. Education Unlimited, 1979, 1(1), 16-22.

Cansler, D. Parents and the gifted-handicapped child. In J. E. Leonard (Ed.), Chapel Hill services to the gifted-handicapped. A project summary. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Chapel Hill Training-Outreach Project, 1977.

Cohen, S. Integrating children with handicaps into early childhood programs. Children Today, January-February, 1975, 15-17.

D'Audney, W. (ed.). Giving a head start to parents of the handicapped. University of Nebraska, Medical Center, Omaha: Meyer Children's Rehabilitation Institute. 1976 (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 119 434)

Devoney, C., Guralnick, M., & Rubin, H. Integrating handicapped and non-handicapped preschool children: Effects of social play. Childhood Education, 1974, 50(6), 360-364.

DeWeerd, J. Introduction. In J. B. Jordan, A. H. Hayden, M. B. Karnes, & M. M. Wood (Eds.), Early childhood education for exceptional children: A handbook of ideas and exemplary practices. Reston, Virginia: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1977.

Dunst, C. J. Attitudes of parents with children in contrasting family education programs. Mental Retardation Bulletin, 1976, 4(3), 120-132.

Federal Register, August, 1977.

Garrett, C., & Stovall, E. M. A parent's views on integration. Volta Review, 1972, 74(6), 338-344.

Grossi, J. A., Pinkstaff, D., Henley, S., and Sanford, A. R. The Chapel Hill study of the impact of mainstreaming handicapped children in

Region IV Head Start. Chapel Hill, N. C.: The Chapel Hill Training-Outreach Project, 1975.

Guralnick, M. J. The value of integrating handicapped and nonhandicapped preschool children. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1976, 46(2), 236-245.

Hennon, M. L. Identifying handicapped children for child development programs. Atlanta, GA: Humanics Press, 1977.

Hobbs, N. The futures of children. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975.

Justice, W. P. Serendipity-integrated summer preschool program. Deficience Mentale/Mental Retardation, 1974, 24(3), 4-9.

Karnes, M. B., & Zehrback, R. R. Alternative models for delivering services to young handicapped children. In J. B. Jordan, A. H. Hayden, M. B. Karnes, & M. M. Wood (Eds.), Early childhood education for exceptional children. Reston, Virginia: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1977.

Kaufman, M. J., Gottlieb, J., Agard, J. A., & Kukic, M. B. Mainstreaming: Toward an explication of the construct. Focus on Exceptional Children, 1975, 7(3), 1-12.

Kennedy, P. K., Northcott, W., McCauley, R., & Williams, S. M. Longitudinal sociometric and cross-sectional data on mainstreaming hearing impaired children. The Volta Review, 1976 78(2), 71-81.

Morton, K. A., & Hull, K. Parents and the mainstream. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), Mainstreaming and the minority child. University of Minnesota: Leadership Training Institute Publication, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1976.

Neisworth, J. T., & Madle, R. A. Normalized day care: A philosophy and approach to integrating exceptional and normal chidlren. Child Care Quarterly, 1975, 4(3), 163-171.

Peterson, N. L., & Haralick, J. G. Integration of handicapped and non-handicapped preschoolers: An analysis of play behavior and social interaction. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 1977, October, 235-245.

Peterson, C., Peterson, J., & Scriven, G. Peer imitation by nonhandicapped preschoolers. Exceptional Chidlren, 1977, 43(4), 223-225.

Rister, A. Deaf children in mainstream education. Volta Review, 1975, 77(5), 279-290.

Snyder, L., Apolloni, T., & Cooke, T. P. Integrated settings at the early childhood level: The role of nonretarded peers. Exceptional Chidlren, 1977, 43(5), 262-266.

Turnbull, H. R. Legal implications. In A. J. Pappanikow & J. L. Paul (Eds.), Mainstreaming emotionally disturbed chidlren. Syracuse, N. Y.: University Press, 1977.

Wynne, S., Brown, J. K., Dakof, G., & Ulfelder, L. S. Mainstreaming and early childhood education for handicapped children: A guide for teachers and parents. Final Report. Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, 1975. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 119 445)

Figure 1

The Impact of Mainstreaming on Parents and Families

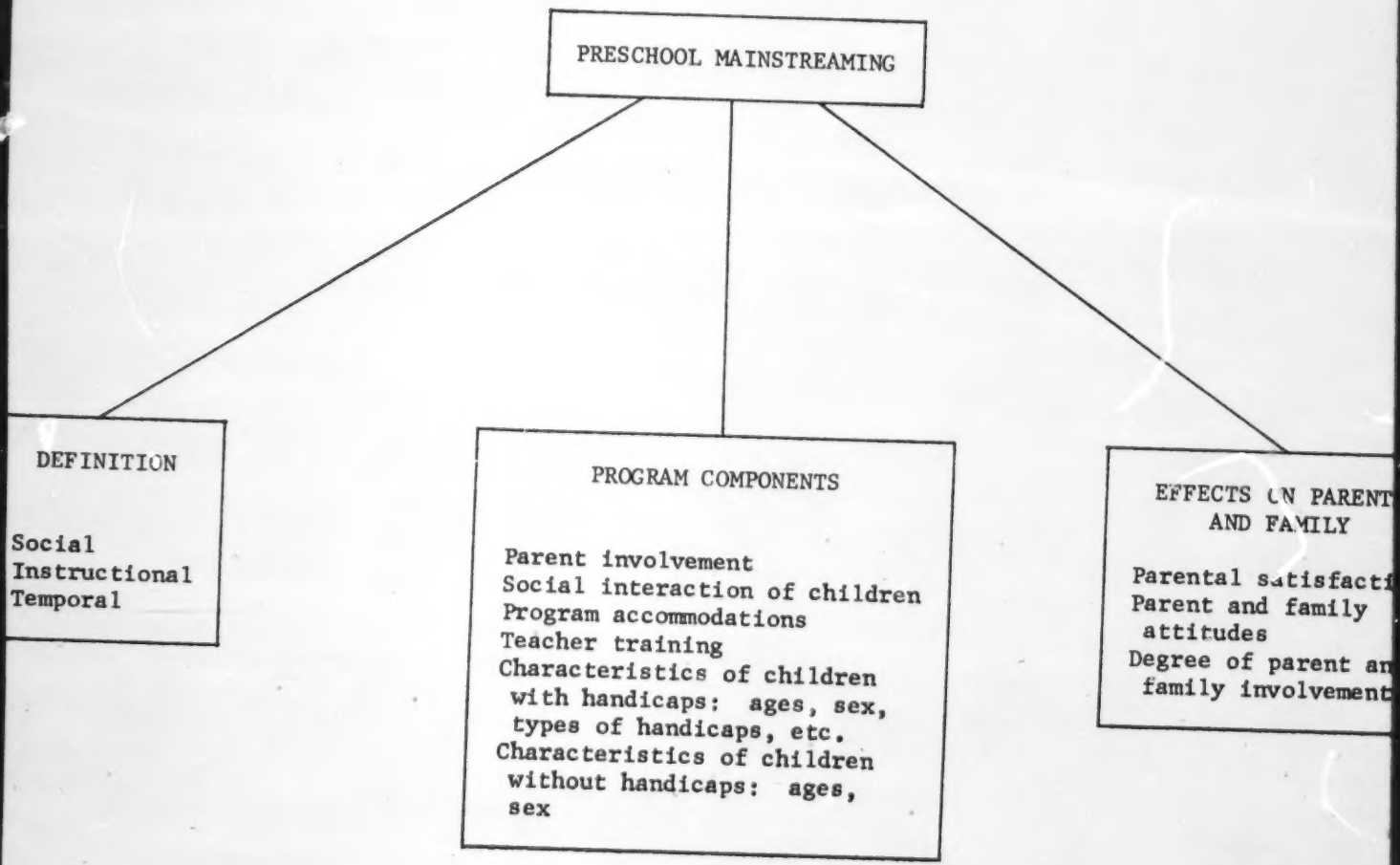


Figure 2

Summary of Preschool Mainstreaming Survey Results

Type of Data \ Type of Mainstreaming Model		REVERSE: (First Chance)	TRADITIONAL: (Head Start)
DEFINITION	Goals for mainstreaming		
	Instructional integration		
	Social integration		
SOCIAL INTERACTION	Handicapped children		
	Nonhandicapped children		
PARENT INVOLVEMENT	Parents of handicapped children		
	Parents of nonhandicapped children		

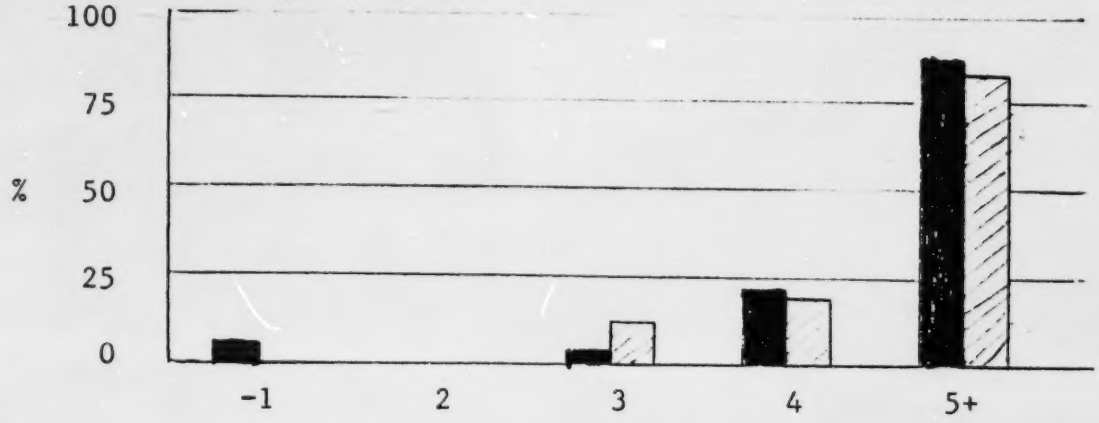
Figure 3

GOALS OF PRESCHOOL MAINSTREAMING

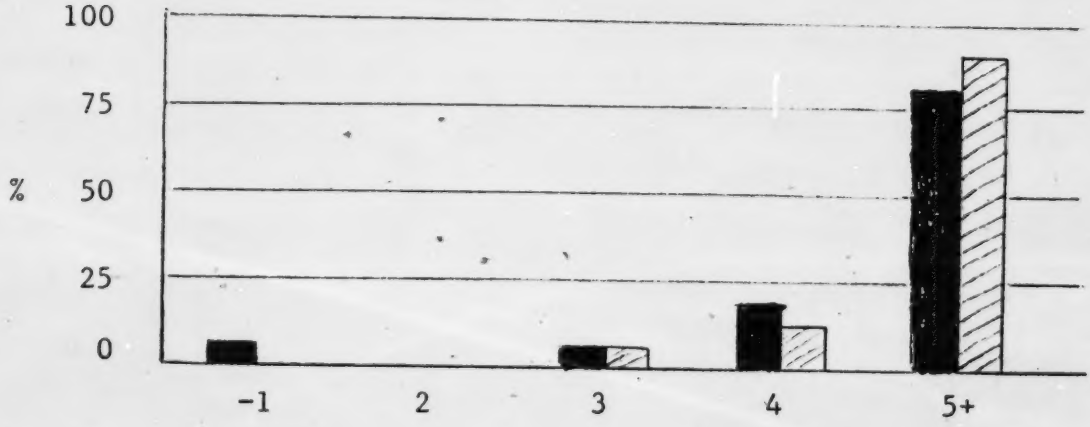
Head Start

First Chance

1. Preschool mainstreaming helps prepare handicapped children for mainstreaming during their school years.



2. Handicapped children learn socialization skills from non-handicapped children.



3. Handicapped children learn cognitive and language skills from nonhandicapped children.

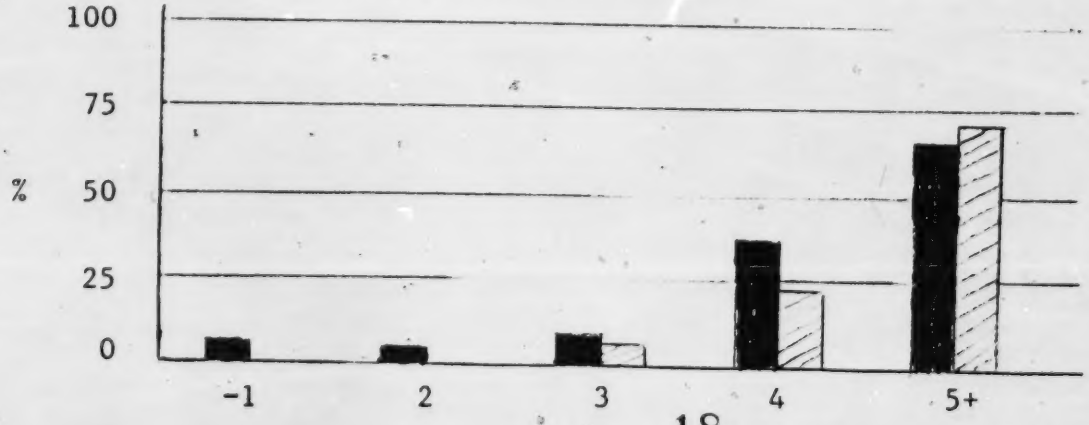
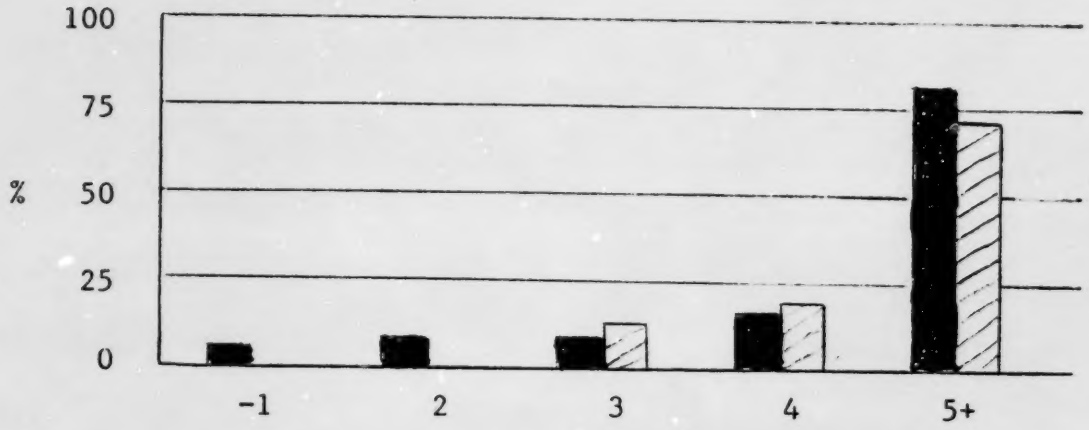
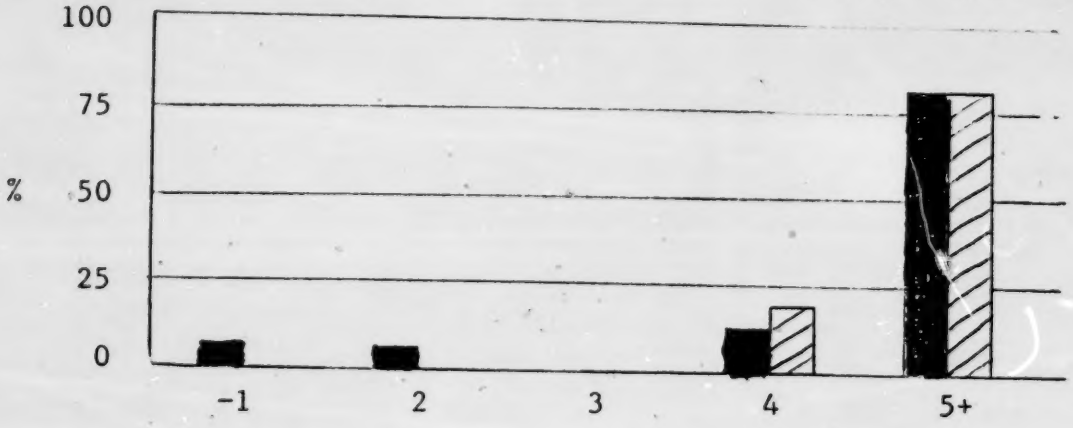


Figure 3 (cont.)

4. Nonhandicapped children learn to develop sensitivity to others by having the opportunity to know handicapped children.



5. Handicapped children are placed in a more "normal" atmosphere having the opportunity to have nonhandicapped friends.



6. Parents of handicapped children believe mainstreaming is best for their children.

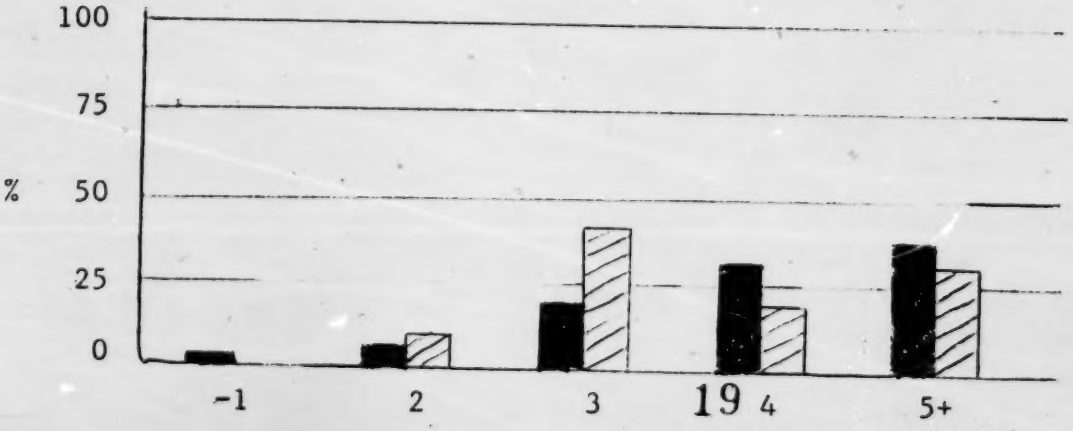


Figure 3 (cont.)

7. Parents of nonhandicapped children believe mainstreaming is best for their children.

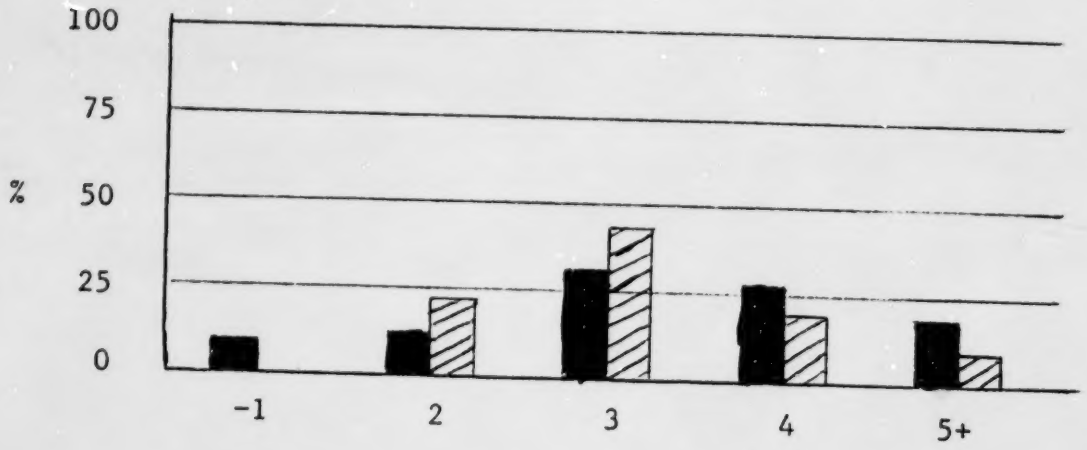


Table 1

Instructional Integration

STATEMENTS	MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES	
	Head Start	First Chance
1. Handicapped children are at the same developmental level as the majority of their nonhandicapped peers.	Not sure (54%)	Not sure (50%)
2. Handicapped children work on exactly the same objectives and activities as the majority of their nonhandicapped peers.	Not sure (52%)	Not sure (54%)
3. Handicapped children work on <u>different</u> objectives and activities, but within the <u>same</u> content unit as the majority of their nonhandicapped peers.	Slightly agree (51%)	Slightly agree (73%)
4. Handicapped children most often work individually.	Not sure (46%)	Not sure (45%)
5. Handicapped children most often work in groups composed of just handicapped children.	Strongly disagree (42%) Slightly disagree (40%)	Slightly disagree (36%)
6. Handicapped children most often work in groups composed of both handicapped and nonhandicapped children.	Slightly agree (44%) Strongly agree (40%)	Slightly agree (54%)
7. When most of the class understands a new concept or skill, the handicapped child understands also.	Not sure (53%)	Not sure (59%)
8. The expectations for handicapped children are the same as for the nonhandicapped children.	Not sure (46%)	Not sure (50%)
9. The expectations for handicapped children are less than for the nonhandicapped children.	Not sure (44%)	Not sure (45%)
10. The expectations for handicapped children are greater than for the nonhandicapped children.	Slightly disagree (37%)	Slightly disagree (50%)

Table 2

Social Integration

STATEMENTS	MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES	
	Head Start	First Chance
1. In unstructured play situations, handicapped children most frequently play with other handicapped children.	Slightly disagree (49%)	Not sure (45%)
2. In unstructured play situations, handicapped children most frequently play with nonhandicapped children.	Slightly agree (49%)	Not sure (41%)
3. Teachers specifically structure activities to include handicapped and nonhandicapped children.	Strongly agree (70%)	Slightly agree (59%)
4. Handicapped children prefer some handicapped children to some non-handicapped children.	Not sure (40%)	Not sure (50%)
5. Nonhandicapped children initiate interaction with handicapped children.	Slightly agree (47%)	Slightly agree (36%) Not sure (36%)
6. Handicapped children initiate interaction with nonhandicapped children.	Slightly agree (49%)	Not sure (45%)
7. Nonhandicapped children "help" handicapped children, serving as advocates or "buddies."	Slightly agree (64%)	Slightly agree (50%)

Table 3

Types of Parent Involvement in Preschool Mainstreaming Programs

Regularly scheduled parent meetings

* Volunteering as helpers in the program

* Observing their child in the classroom

* Working with children at home on follow-up activities

* Individual parent-teacher conferences

Advocacy services

Home visits

* Learning to teach their own children

* Informal exchange between teachers and parents

· (Parent counseling or therapy)

* = Those forms of parent involvement that teachers felt were most necessary for successful preschool mainstreaming.

· = This was offered by very few Head Start or First Chance programs.

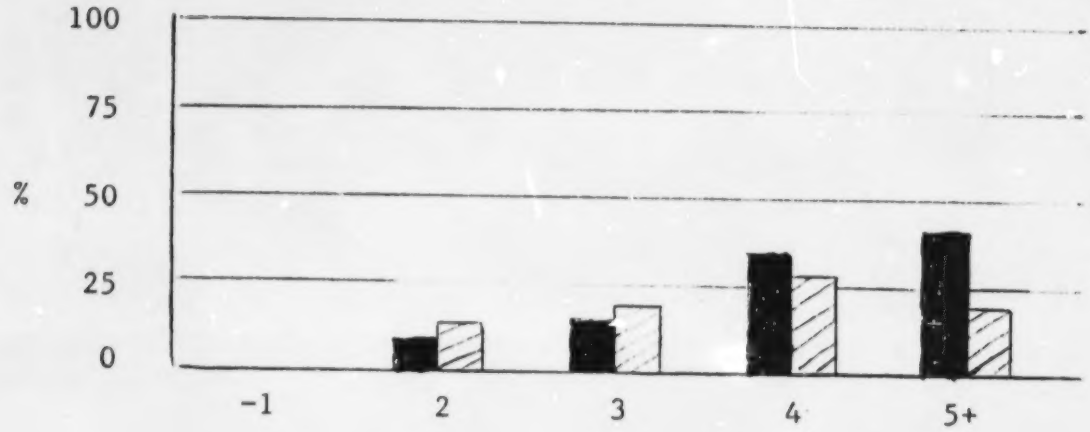
Figure 4

MAINSTREAMING PARENTS

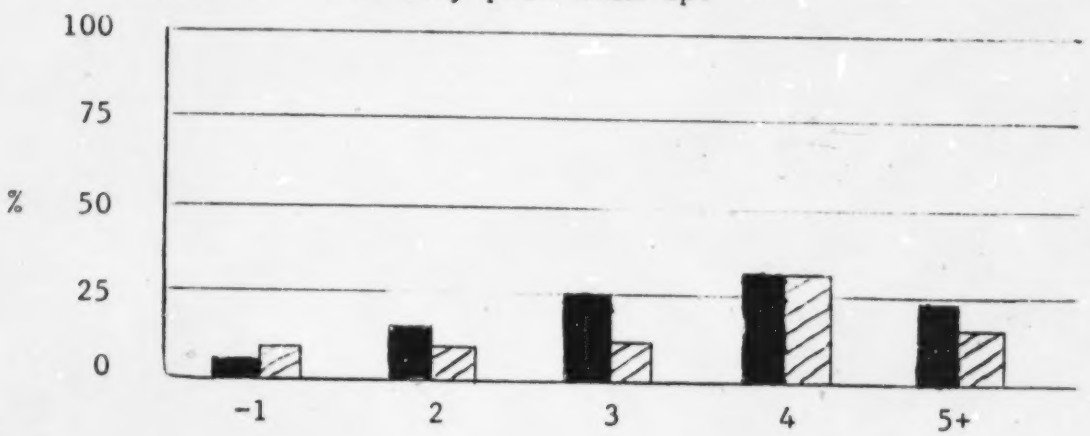
Head Start

First Chance

1. Parents of both handicapped and parents of nonhandicapped children mingle and talk together at parent meetings.



2. Parents of handicapped and parents of nonhandicapped children interact during the times when they bring their children to class and when they pick them up.



3. On parent workshop days, or on days that parents might be working in the preschool classroom, the parents of handicapped children and the parents of nonhandicapped children work together.

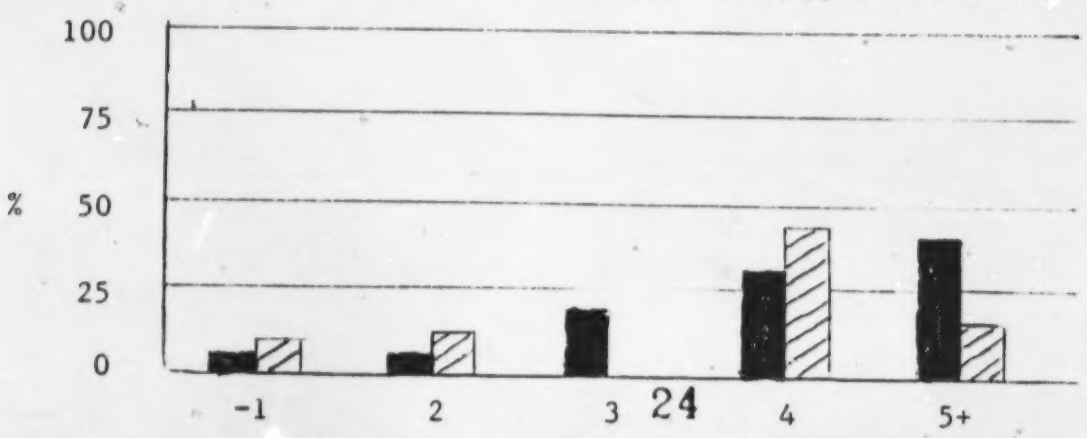
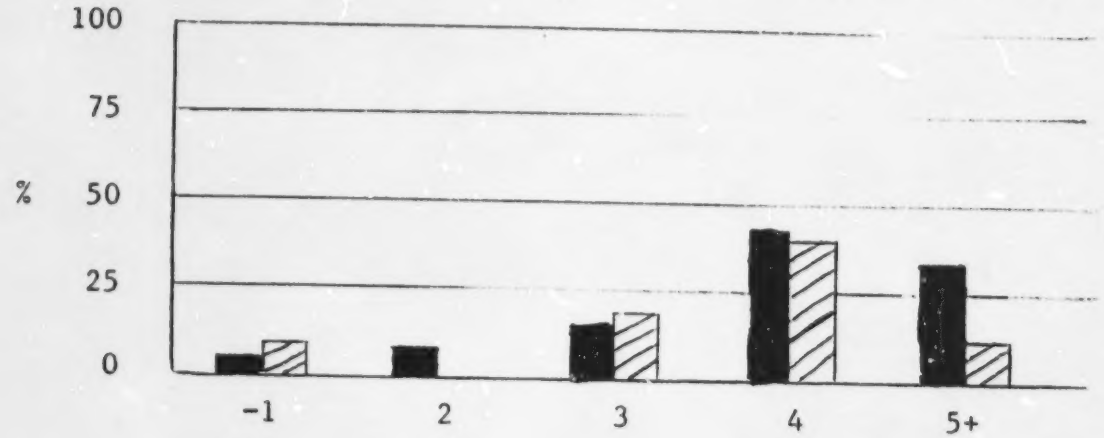


Figure 4 (cont.)

4. While working in or visiting class, parents of nonhandicapped children teach or interact with handicapped children.



5. While working in or visiting class, parents of handicapped children teach or interact with nonhandicapped children.